

Inventory Management at Argus Farm Stop

After the Harvest Conference
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How do we manage inventory?

- We do not utilize conventional inventory management software or techniques
- We do not formally track consignment delivery quantities
- We use tools like paper, pens, masking tape, and frequent communication
- Meet the role of Produce Manager
- Compare consignment vs. wholesale producers



Essentials Overview: Producer-Product Identity to Payouts

- Order/anticipate delivery
- Pre-processing: Receive delivery
- Processing: Cement Producer Identity with Product Identity (PPI)
- Storage and Display: maintain PPI
- Point of Sale and Payouts: ultimate objective is for producers to be properly paid for their goods





Intake Form

Producer _____

Label - Store - Retail Edge Maintenance - Barcode – Signage - Display

Item Name & Variety	Quantity (lbs, cases, etc.)	Price per Unit (\$/lb, \$/ea, \$/qt, etc.)	Date Received/ Staff Initials	Notes – What does the producer want to share about this item? Why Grown, Storage/Display Preferences, Potential Uses, etc.

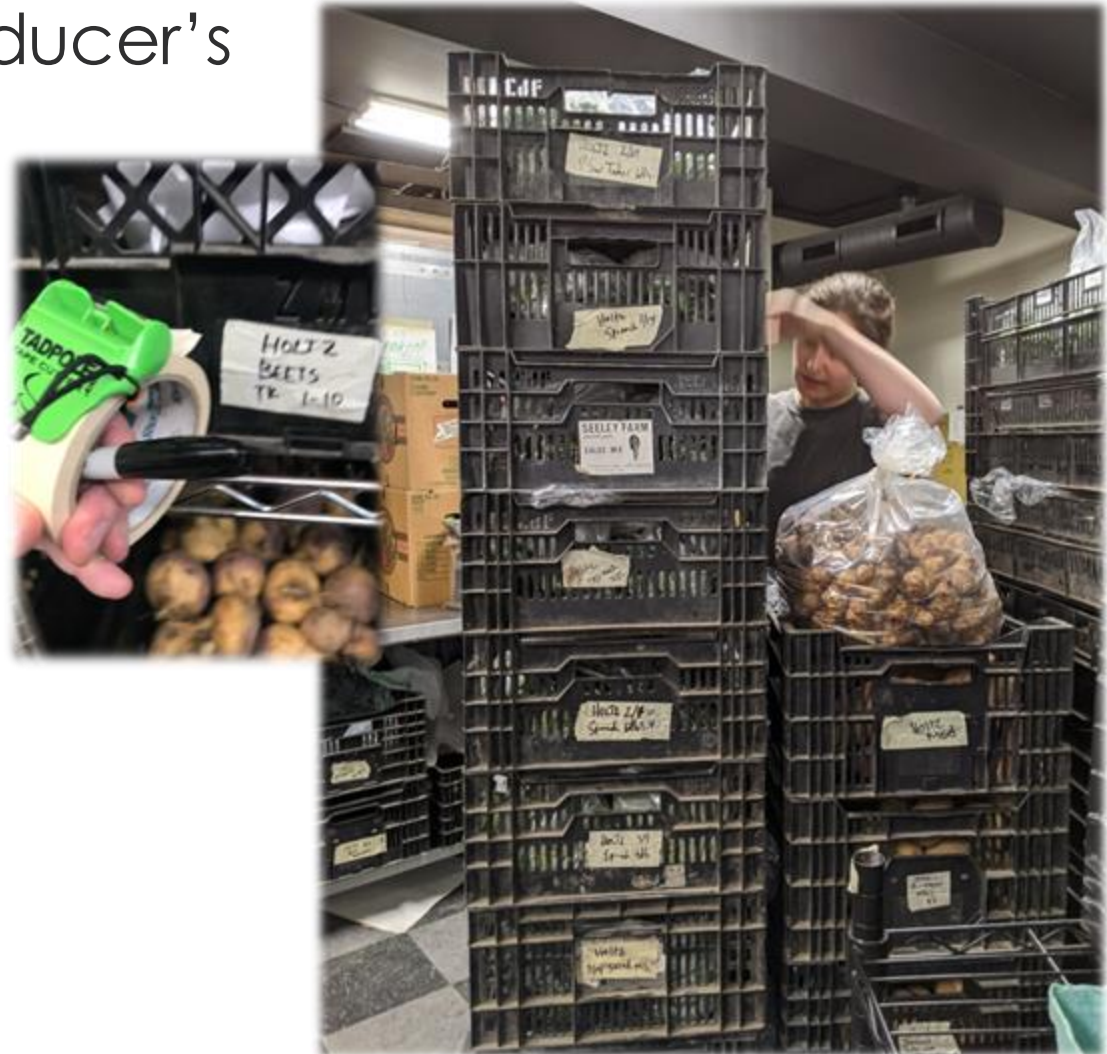
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<u>Labels for Processed Items Need:</u> ☐ Product Identity ☐ Ingredients & Sub-Ingredients ☐ Allergens ☐ Net Weight (both US & Metric) ☐ Producer Name & Address ☐ Best/Sell By date Or Lot Number			<u>Time/Temperature Sensitive Items Must:</u> ☐ Arrive in Cooler/Refrigerated Unit ☐ Be at Temperature: ☐ Milk/Eggs: $\leq 45^{\circ}$ ☐ Prepared Foods: $\leq 41^{\circ}$ ☐ Frozen Items: $\leq 32^{\circ}$
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Labeling Product for storage

The goal here is to keep the producer's identity with their products.

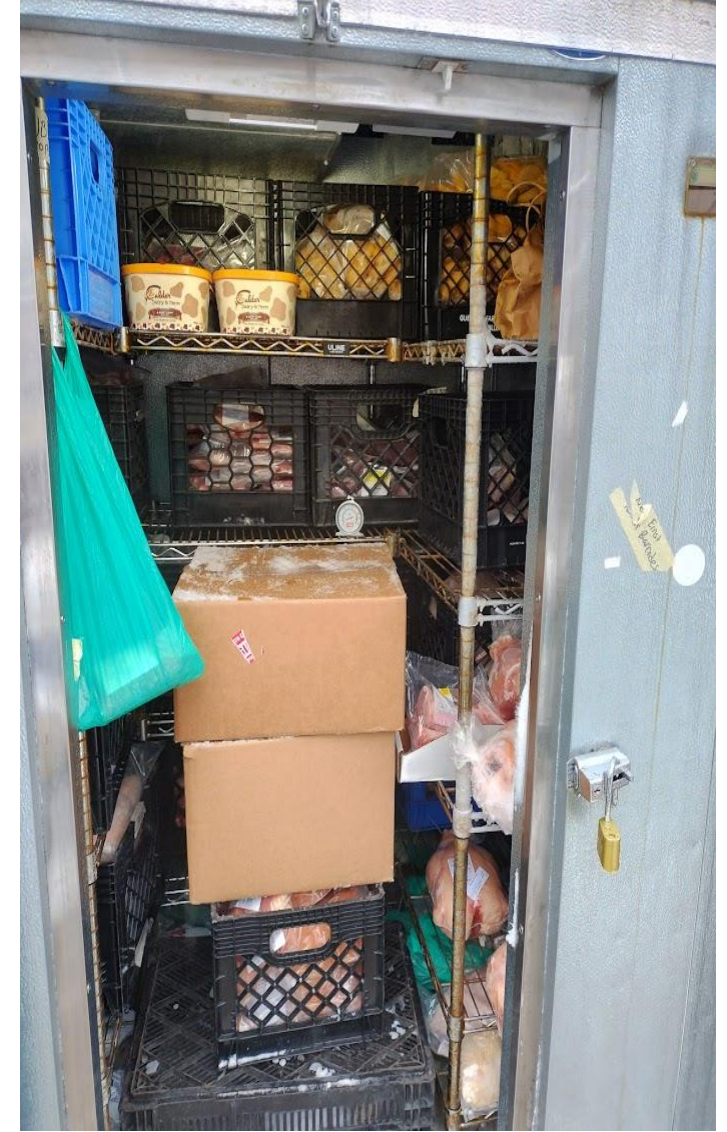
- **Label all containers with:**
 - Producer name
 - Item name
 - Date received
 - Initial/Inventory notes
- Store in proper environment
- Use best-fit containers
- Add products to "The List"



Cold Storage Dry Storage



Freezer



Storing Product

- Try to keep products organized by producer while in storage (not by type)
- Store in appropriate environment
- FIFO (First In, First Out)
- Remember food safety

Fridge & Freezer

Walk-in fridge (cold box)

- Produce
- Dairy/Eggs

Walk-in freezer

- Meat
- Some prepared foods

Dry Storage

Back-of-store
shelving/shed/etc.

- Canned goods
- Non-refrigerated produce
- Artisan goods

Straight to the Floor

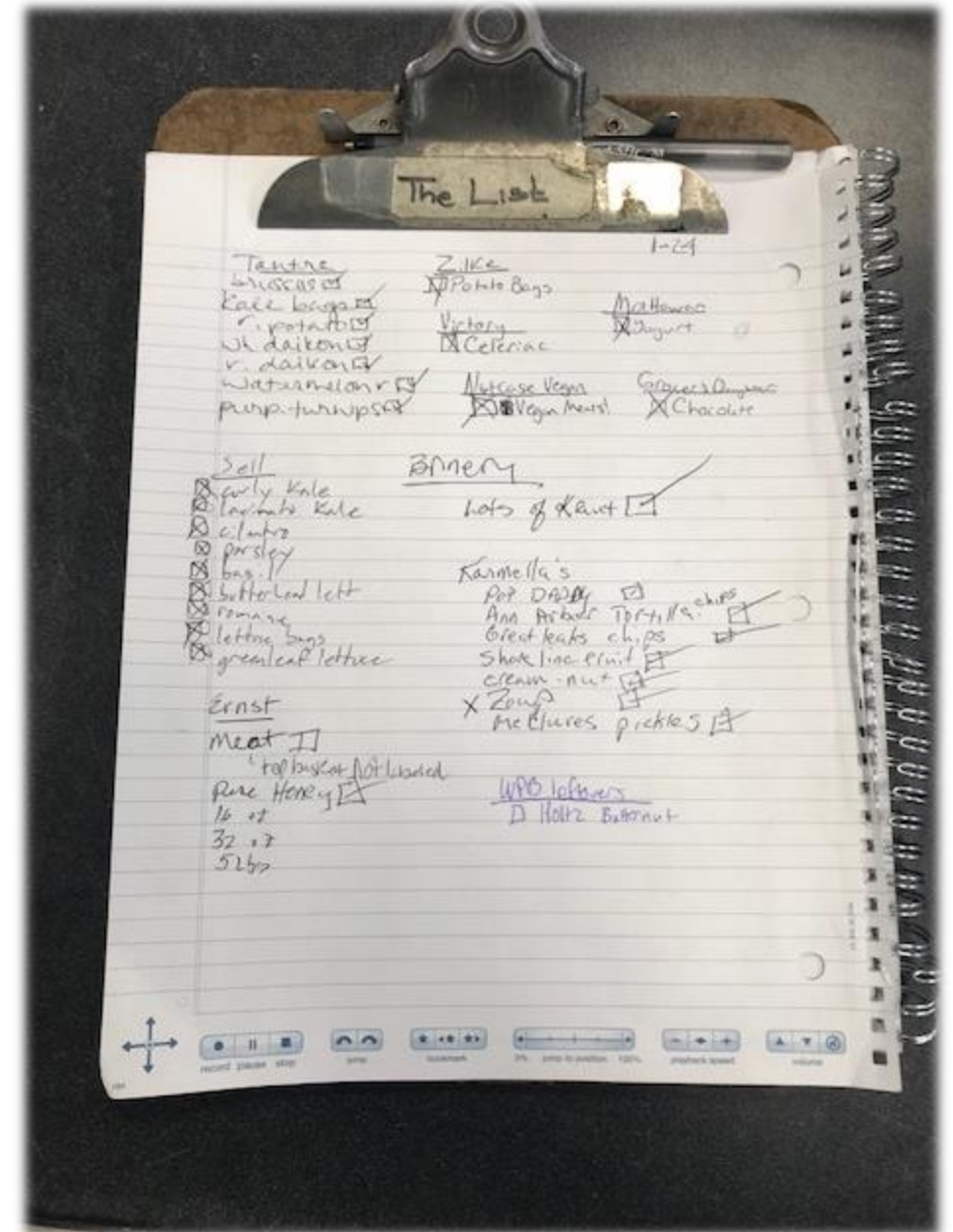
- Some prepared foods
- Bread & pastry
- Things with low inventory/stock

Well Labeled Product In Storage



The List

- What it sounds like!
- Basic, simple, and effective
- Organized by producer
- Check Mark Requirements:
 - Proper label
 - Storage crates & boxes are labeled
 - Individual items are stickered with upcs
 - Proper storage
 - Timely
 - Cold, dry, frozen, etc.
 - Proper display
 - Producer Name
 - Item name
 - Price/unit
 - Attractive to shop



Labeling Product for display



Our POS software gives every item a unique barcode and a unique 6-digit code.

We can use either to label products.

Considerations

- Will the sticker get wet?
- How is the product being sold?
By the each? By the quart?
- Will a sticker fit or stay on the product?

Preserving Producer Identity



Point of Sale to Payouts



- Cement PPI as much as possible
- Labeling everything reduces payout error
- Products don't get lost in the ether
- Eases customer transactions – both comfort and speed
- Customer loyalty: customers return for items from their favorite producers

Key: The Produce Manager



- Always has their finger on the pulse of the producers
- Manages ordering of products
- Curates variety and quantities of products
- Keeps in regular communication with producers
- Gives feedback to producers
- Resident “expert” on all products
- Oversees displays of all products
- Monitors refrigeration equipment
- Other point people similar, but with less complexity (ie meat, prepared foods)

Communication Essentials Overview



- Orders, Inventories, and Checks
- Don't lose track
- Touch everything on a periodic scale: minutes, hours, days, weeks, months
- Organize “best” communications for both us and producer
 - Phone, text, email, in-person, mail

The Essential Tool: Daily Market Happenings

- One of two central communication tools for staff working in back-of-store
 - Second is “The List” previously featured
- Helps us keep track of all producer relationships
- Ensures regular and timely communication
- Provides communication guidance for each producer (as every relationship is unique)
- Can be paper/pen, spreadsheet, database, or project software



Tuesday

#	✓	Producers	Notes	PP	Par
Type: Inventory					
1	☐ Initials:	Dave Makes Pasta			Pars
2	☐ Initials:	Dyer Family Farms	beeswax, etc.		Pars
3	☐ Initials:	Hannewald Lamb Farm	dog treats in greenhouse		Pars
4	☐ Initials:	Juicy Kitchen	Specify flavors of frozen soup. No need to count all co...		Pars
5	☐ Initials:	Neu Kombucha			Pars
6	☐ Initials:	Seeley Farm		Dani	Pars
7	☐ Initials:	Touchstone Microgre			Pars
8	☐ Initials:	Webbed Foot Pines	Email egg inventory - be thorough, count carefully	Michael	Pars
Type: Order					
9	☐ Initials:	Cherry Capital Foods	Order for Thursday Afternoon, Produce & Dry Goods - ...	Anna, Dani, ...	Pars
10	☐ Initials:	Kapnick Orchards	Dani in PM	Dani	Pars
11	☐ Initials:	The Farmers' Creame	Place Order Before Noon	Michael	Pars
12	☐ Initials:	Vertex Coffee Roaster	Use new online ordering tool.		Pars
13	☐ Initials:	Webbed Foot Pines	email Lucas about meat	Michael	Pars
Type: Report					
14	☐ Initials:	Ernst Farm	Send report for previous week of sales. Also, count ba...		Pars
15	☐ Initials:	Webbed Foot Pines	Send a report for one week of sales for both stores	Michael	Pars

Ordering Products

Ideally, you want (~3) types of each product to have a good mix of:

- Variety
- Producers represented
- Growing practices
- Quantities & pars

Managing fairness in ordering

- Size of business/farm
- Reliance on Argus for revenue
- Seniority
- Quality
- Uniqueness



Example Order Forms

Tantre Farm

Good morning folks,
Here is a list of produce for the weekend. *Please place your orders by 12 PM Friday afternoon*, and please call or email if you have any questions. Additionally, please respect the \$50 minimum rule for your order. Items marked limited are still available, but we may not be able to fill your order in its entirety.

Thanks,
Donn
Tantre Farm

PRODUCE AVAILABLE	\$/unit	Your Order
Beets, Red	\$2/lb/bunch	
Brussels Sprouts	\$3/lb/stalk	
Cabbage, Green (limited)	\$1/lb	
Carrots, Orange	\$2/bunch/lb	
Carrots, Purple Haze	\$2/bunch/lb	
Carrots, Red	\$2/bunch/lb	
Kale, Green Curly (limited)	\$2/bunch	
Kale, Rainbow Lacinato (limited)	\$2/bunch	
Kale, Red Curly (limited)	\$2/bunch	
Kohlrabi	\$1/lb	
Onions, Red	\$1.50/lb	
Onions, Yellow	\$1.50/lb	
Potatoes, Blue (limited)	\$1.50/lb	
Potatoes, Mountain Rose	\$1.50/lb	
Potatoes, Fingerling (limited)	\$1.50/lb	
Potatoes, Kerr's Pink	\$1.50/lb	
Potatoes, Yukon Gold	\$1.50/lb	

Arbor Teas

Liberty and Packard order individually; email Aubrey, Jeremy, Sarah (Sarah generally handles the o Remember to check Cafe Tea Bags

LIBERTY Retail	Par REVIEW
Crimson Berry	6
Pu-Erh	6
Peach Rooibos	6
Peppermint	6
Ginger Chili	6
Chai	6
Assam	6
Nilgiri	6
Earl Grey	6
Gunpowder Green	6
Houjicha	6

Par Sheet Example

- Conveniently summarizes producer contact info
- Provides clear instruction (many hands) on “how to” for each
- Provides supplementary information that may be helpful (case sizes, reorder points, pars, cost, order minimums, etc.

Hacienda Mexican Foods

Liberty and Packard communicate separately. Minimum order of \$150. See price list [here!](#)
Email: csr@hmf-tortilla.com or call to follow up: 313-895-8823

Liberty Item	Par*
Chips Blue 14oz (12) \$28.68	1 case
5" Flour Street Tacos (24) \$19.75	Backstock par: 2 cases
Flour Tortillas 10 inch (12) \$21.60	Backstock par: 4 cases
YELLOW Corn Tortillas Family Pack (12) \$12.00	Backstock par: 2 cases
White Corn Tortillas	Backstock par: 1 cases

Packard Item	Par
Chips Blue 14oz (12) \$28.68	2 cases
5" Flour Street Tacos (24) \$19.75	3 case
6" Flour Street Tacos (24) \$19.75	1 case
Flour Tortillas 10 inch (12) \$21.60	3 cases
White Corn Tortillas (12)	2 cases
YELLOW Corn Tortillas Family Pack (12) \$12.00	1 case

Wholesale Relationships

One-on-one Independents & Distributors

Why?

- To fill gaps in local production
- To offer a different variety or price point
- To complement other products
 - Heavy cream during berry season
 - Mozzarella during tomato season
- To offer something you couldn't otherwise
 - Some producers simply will or cannot do consignment



Food Waste

Ways to Minimize

- Right-size your orders
- Store products quickly and properly
 - Note condition upon receiving
- Monitor product in storage & on display

Where It Goes

- Local food bank
- Compost

Talk with your producers about what to do with unsellable products



Should you be tracking inventory?

The Cost

- Slows down intake process
- Many items are perishable
- POS software typically assumes wholesale terms, and wants to track cost
- Numbers can distract from maintaining producer relationships as #1 priority
- Needs regular correcting, and that task grows with the increase of items sold

Alternate Methods

- Informal sales reports from the POS between payouts
- Organize regular producer communications (ours is called the “DMH”)
- Track waste of items with an expiration date as a \$0 sale during daily closing routines
- Use POS sales reports to inform ordering amounts